

Daily Recap of Motor Vehicle Traffic Deaths (Daily Fatal Recap)

Currently produced by the State Patrol's Collision Records Section, the Daily Fatal Recap (DFR) gives a brief summary of each fatal collision that is reported to the State Patrol. The information is collected from several sources: Teletype notification through the ACCESS communication system, fax notification from county and city law enforcement agencies, and other sources such as death certificates. In the case of those fatal collisions that the State Patrol discovers through other sources, a "dummy" traffic fatality Teletype sheet is completed and microfilmed. The regular teletypes and fax notices are also microfilmed. When these documents are microfilmed, a number is imprinted on them. This microfilm number is used to link these documents with the actual fatal collision report in the State Patrol's microfilm retrieval system.

The information obtained from these various sources is summarized into the DFR. The description of each accident must be carefully worded so as to not misstate any facts. Currently, several agencies receive the fatal recap including the Associated Press, WSDOT, Fatality Analysis and Reporting System (FARS), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and Superintendent of Public Instruction. In addition, the State Patrol produces a separate Teletype that shows fatality totals by WSP District for internal use. Finally, each month, a summary of fatalities that occurred during that period is supplied to FARS.

Because of security and training considerations, it has been suggested that which ever agency inherits the responsibility for producing the fatal recap not attempt to establish their own ACCESS terminal. Because all the fatal teletype notices go to the State Patrol's HQ, an arrangement could be made to have the teletype notices faxed to the agency responsible for producing the daily fatal recap. For those notices that are currently faxed in from local law enforcement to the State Patrol, the new receiving agency's fax number would have to be supplied to these sheriff and police departments.

Kip Johnson of the State Patrol's Collision Record Section has stressed that because of the amount of prep and administrative work required to produce the daily fatal recap, it almost takes one-person full time to do this. This includes contacting law enforcement agencies to get additional information on fatal collisions, reviewing death certificates, coordinating with the FARS Analyst, inputting data into the DFR form and distributing the completed DFR to its customers.

Possible locations for the transfer of the DFR function include the FARS section at the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, and the Collision Data and Analysis Branch at WSDOT's Transportation Data Office.